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### Montana Grizzlies end basketball season

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MONTANA GRIZZLIES END BASKETBALL SEASON  
rosenthal/jg

MISSOULA--

The Montana Grizzlies closed out their 1977-78 basketball season with a 62-55 overtime loss to Weber State in the championship game of the Big Sky Conference Basketball Tournament, held in Missoula this past weekend.

Montana, the host team with a 12-2 first place finish in regular season league play, defeated Boise State, 70-61 Friday night while Weber State downed Idaho State, 84-79. The WSC Wildcats then topped the Griz in the title game.

Weber State had finished the regular season with a 9-5 league mark and a third place finish, two games behind Idaho State and a game ahead of Boise State.

Montana's 21-8 overall record ties the 1974-75 club record. It's also only the fourth time a UM team has topped the 20-game win plateau. Besides the 1974-75 team and this season's group, the 1949-50 club (27-4) and the 1947-48 team (21-11) topped the 20-win mark.

Senior guards Jim Molloy and Michael Ray Richardson saw their last games for UM and went out in style. Molloy, a 6-2 senior from Malta, Mont., set a new conference tournament record for assists, garnering 13 in the Boise State game for a single game record and adding 5 more in the Weber State game for a two-game record of 18, breaking the previous record of 12.

Richardson, the 6-5 All-American from Denver, scored 21 points against Boise State and tallied 25 more in the WSC game. "Sugar Ray" was named to the all-tournament team as selected by sports writers and sports broadcasters in attendance. He was joined on the elite five by Weber State's Bruce Collins and Richard Smith, Boise State's Steve Connor and Idaho State's Lawrence Butler. Collins was named most valuable player in the tourney.

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"We are very disappointed we did not win the tournament," UM Head Basketball Coach Jim Brandenburg said. "The ball just did not go in for us at times and we missed some crucial opportunities.

"We lost some momentum in the first seven or eight minutes of the second half and let an eight point halftime lead slip away from us. Then we just couldn't get anything going. Some missed free throws and turnovers enabled Weber to get the win. They played smart basketball near the end," Brandenburg said.

Brandenburg expressed great satisfaction with his team's performance through the season and praised the fan support.

"I would be remiss if I didn't express my appreciation of the young men on this club, and our fans for giving me a very successful basketball season. Going 21-8 has brought a lot of pleasure to Grizzly fans and I've received a great deal of pleasure, too," the UM coach said.

Including the two tournament games Montana played, 118,958 fans attended 15 home basketball games, and averaged 7,932 a game, both club records. The team and Big Sky record of 9,350 fans for a single game still stands. That was set two weekends ago against both Boise State and Idaho State.

Only Richardson and Molloy graduate from a relatively young team. The three junior forwards, Craig Henkel, Allan Nielsen and Charlie Yankus return with sophomore center John Stroeder. Freshmen forwards Craig Zanon and Rodney Brandon picked up a valuable season of experience and will return next season. The guard situation will definitely change with the two spots now open. Sophomores Tim McCauley and Rick Zanon, and freshmen Blaine Taylor and Dennis Gay will be given every opportunity to get a starting job. Also, freshman center Marty Green will be back, with the new recruits for next season.

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